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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

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18 July 1969

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State Department review completed

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Approved For Release 2004/03/11 : CIA-RDP79T00975A014100130002-9

Approved For Release 2004/03/11 : CIA-RDP79T00975A014100130002-9

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NATO: NATO representatives have generally endorsed US intentions to enter into strategic arms limitations talks with the Soviet Union later this summer.

Most of the delegations at the 16 July meeting of the North Atlantic Council viewed the time as opportune for such talks because both sides share a rough parity in nuclear weaponry and an interest in devoting national resources to other projects. There was general sentiment that the US should seek as comprehensive an agreement as possible, but should approach the talks with maximum flexibility as to positions and tactics.

The Allies' continuing concern over several key aspects of the proposed talks was repeatedly expressed, however. The Europeans want no limitation on US arms which will weaken the defense of Western Europe. They are anxious that any agreement include restrictions on Soviet intermediate and medium range missiles targeted on Europe but exclude NATO's tactical nuclear weapons.

Many of the Allies see a moratorium on the testing of MIRVs and the deployment of ABMs as the most important goal of the US-Soviet talks. They foresee difficulties, however, in working out verification procedures for the limitation of these weapons systems.

Each of the NATO representatives expressed satisfaction at having been consulted by the US prior to the development of its negotiating position. It was made clear, however, that the Council anticipates that the US will consult with the Allies again prior to the opening of the talks with the Soviets and regularly thereafter.

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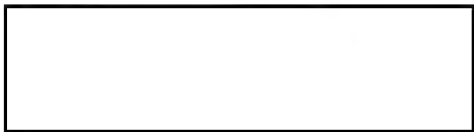
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